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## NEWS RELEASE

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# Governor Encourages More Citizen Involvement in Providing Healthier Environments for Children

## ***Walker declares October as “Children’s Environmental Health Month”***

(Salt Lake City, Utah) – At the 2004 Children’s Environmental Health Regional Summit, Utah Gov. Olene Walker today encouraged Utah citizens to become more involved in providing healthier environments for children. She also declared October as “Children’s Environmental Health Month” in Utah.

“Providing healthier environments for our children is fundamental to helping them reach their full potential,” Walker said.

Walker issued a challenge to citizens to learn more about children’s environmental health; work together; and improve the environment in their homes, schools and communities.

She said that education and partnerships are the keys that unlock the doors to better children’s environmental health. She expressed confidence in Utah’s ability to make a difference, citing examples of schools and communities partnering to improve air and water quality.

“Every one of us plays a vital role in protecting our children from environmental hazards,” Walker said. “It is important we get involved now in order to ensure healthy generations for years to come.”

Nearly 200 environmental, health and education professionals from Utah and surrounding states have gathered in Salt Lake City to learn how to identify, prevent and reduce environmental health threats to children.

Environmental health threats to children include lead poisoning, pesticides, tobacco smoke, mold, asthma, drinking water contaminants, toxic waste dumps, poor nutrition, overexposure to the sun's harmful ultraviolet light, injuries and diseases.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, children are more vulnerable than adults to environmental hazards because their systems are still developing. They also eat proportionately more food, drink more fluids and breathe more air than adults. As a result, they are exposed to more pollutants per pound of body weight than adults. Furthermore, today's children have a longer life expectancy and thus a longer time to develop diseases resulting from environmental exposures.

To celebrate "Children's Environmental Health Month," the Utah Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) will host a fair Friday, Oct. 8 from noon to 4 p.m. at the Salt Lake City Library Plaza, 210 E. 400 South. The fair is free and open to the public.

More than 25 booths will feature children's environmental health topics. Giveaways and the "Sun Guy" from the Utah Cancer Action Network will also be part of the fair.

Other children's environmental health activities are planned during October throughout Utah. To find out what's happening in your area, contact your local health department.

"We can make a difference," said Dianne Nielson, DEQ executive director. "Join us in working to provide healthier environments for children."

More information on children's environmental health is available online at [www.childrenshealth.utah.gov](http://www.childrenshealth.utah.gov)

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